

TESTIMONY OF TOM SWAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CONNECTICUT CITIZEN ACTION GROUP (CCAG)

February 26, 2019

BEFORE THE ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

S.B. No. 846 AN ACT CONCERNING THE MUNICIPAL GAIN, THE PREPARATION OF UTILITY POLES AND ENTERPRISE FUNDS FOR MUNICIPAL BROADBAND SERVICES.

[H.B. 7155](#) AN ACT CONCERNING CONSUMER PROTECTIONS FOR CUSTOMERS OF ELECTRIC SUPPLIERS

[S.B. 875](#) AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT'S OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY PORTFOLIO and H.B. [No. 7156](#) AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCUREMENT OF ENERGY DERIVED FROM OFFSHORE WIND

S.B. 889 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY'S INVESTIGATION OF LOST AND UNACCOUNTED FOR GAS

Senator Needleman, Representative and other members of the Energy and Technology Committee my name is Tom Swan and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group. On behalf of our thousands of member families I want to thank you for holding today's hearing. There are a number of bills that I would like to share our perspective on.

CCAG supports S.B. No. 846 AN ACT CONCERNING THE MUNICIPAL GAIN, THE PREPARATION OF UTILITY POLES AND ENTERPRISE FUNDS FOR MUNICIPAL BROADBAND SERVICES. We believe that this will foster economic development in many communities, ensure that communities are not left behind as the information technology evolves, and assist with implementing Governor Lamont's vision for our internet future.

We urge you to significantly amend [H.B. 7155](#) AN ACT CONCERNING CONSUMER PROTECTIONS FOR CUSTOMERS OF ELECTRIC SUPPLIERS. Albert Einstein defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. We have been enacting consumer protections in response to abusive practices by suppliers since deregulation was enacted 15 years ago. The suppliers have not failed to figure out new schemes or choose just to flaunt the new laws in order to fleece consumers. The proposed protections in 7155, while likely well intentioned, fit Einstein's definition of insanity to a T. It will not stop the scammers from scamming.

As we mentioned in the hearing last week, it is high time that to end the third-party supplier scam for residential customers. The Consumer Counsel has put forward a very good proposal to do this and to assist in meeting our green energy goals. We urge you to amend that proposal in a strike all amendment. We look forward to working with the Committee and other legislators to end this failed policy and to enact the Consumer Counsel's proposal this year.

CCAG supports the concepts included in [S.B. 875](#) AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT'S OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY PORTFOLIO and H.B. [No. 7156](#) AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCUREMENT OF ENERGY DERIVED FROM OFFSHORE WIND. The decline in the cost of energy produced by wind along with the potential for job creation in the production and building wind turbines make it a smart strategy for economic development and a significant down payment on Governor Lamont's call for a carbon neutral future.

There are several changes we would propose for 875. These include: in the Governor's bill: Make the 2000 MW threshold a mandated floor for procurement not a cap with a deadline defined, environmental protections, and the ability to work with other states in procuring energy. Governor Lamont has laid out an ambitious goal for moving to becoming a carbon free state and the looming climate catastrophe demands a greater sense of urgency. We urge you to strengthen 875 in a manner that meets the urgency of the moment.

Finally, CCAG supports SB 889 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY'S INVESTIGATION OF LOST AND UNACCOUNTED FOR GAS. The technology exists to ensure that no more than 1% leakage from gas pipelines. It will save the state millions, increase public safety and limit the damage to our climate from methane (which is extremely harmful) leaking into the atmosphere. Furthermore, we think you should consider eliminating the ability for gas companies from recouping the costs of lost and unaccounted for gas from ratepayers.

Thank you for your consideration.